Effect of increase in the prices of rice on rice consuming States

411. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent hike in the issue price of rice has adversely affected the rice consuming States such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal; Karnataka and others;

(b) the reasons for raising the issue price while there is no corresponding rise in the procurement price of paddy or rice; and

(c) whether such a rise in the issue price is likely to benefit the middlemen?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) No, Sir. The Central issue prices are applicable, uniformly, throughout the country.

(b) The Central issue prices of rice were increased on account of the increase in the support prices of paddy for the 1988-89 kharif marketing payable to the farmers.

(c) No, Sir.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

412. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a likely delay in the production schedule of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant:

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this delay;

(c) whether it is likely to affect the targeted steel production in the country; if so, in what manner; and

(d) whether this is also likely to necessitate increased imports of steel into the country in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons are delay on the part of Andhra Pradesh Government to make water available by the construction of the Yeleru Canal for the plant inadequate peformance of some of the contractors and delay in the supply of certain items of equipment.

(c) and (d) The targetted steel production in the country will go down marginally due to delay in starting production in the Vizag Steel Plant. This may result in consequent additional imports.

Minimum wages for workers

413. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any guidelines exist for revision of minimum wages of Beedi workers in the country.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of the States where minimum wages of Beedi workers were revised during 1987 and 1988?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHAKISHAN MALAVIYA): (a) to (c) The employment in beedi industry falls under the sphere of the State Governments. Each State assesses its local conditions and follows suitable criteria while fixing minimum wages. State Governments have been advised to take into consideration all relevant considerations including the poverty line while fixing the minimum wages. As per available information Govern-